



**For Immediate Release
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STATE SPONSORS GREEN ROOF PROJECT IN IPSWICH

IPSWICH—This spring, the North Shore Housing Trust will install a green roof covering of soil and plants to refurbish the roof of the Whipple School Annex. The project, sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is intended to demonstrate the benefits of vegetated or “green” roofs in reducing stormwater runoff from rooftops and improving the water quality of nearby streams.

Green roofs consist of several layers, including a waterproof membrane, root barrier, lightweight soil mixture, and plants. Low-growing, drought-tolerant plants, such as sedum varieties, are used in the “roof meadow,” the type of green roof to be installed in Ipswich. Along with the installation of the green roof, the Whipple Annex, the last remaining building of the Essex Correctional Institute, is being redeveloped into ten one-bedroom units for low-income senior citizens.

“The Whipple School Annex is an ideal location for a green roof,” said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. “Not only does it address water quality, which is particularly important in Ipswich, near the mouth of the river, but combining the project with affordable elderly housing is an excellent example of smart growth.”

“A major benefit of the green roof is that it will absorb most of the rainwater falling on the roof,” explained Sara Cohen, Project Manager for DCR. “If stormwater runoff does occur, it should be cleaner than runoff from a conventional roof, because the soil and plants filter out most pollutants.”

The green roof in Ipswich is one of nine demonstration projects being sponsored by DCR with funds from EPA’s Targeted Watershed program. Most of DCR’s demonstration projects under this grant focus on restoring flows to the Ipswich River, which has been troubled by chronic low flows for more than ten years, but the green roof project focuses on improving water quality.

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“The opportunity to put in a green roof appealed to us for several reasons,” explained Jennifer M. Raitt, executive director of the North Shore Housing Trust. “Besides reducing stormwater pollution, the green roof will reduce our heating and cooling costs. It should also extend the life of the roof, reducing costs over the long term.”

Construction of the green roof is expected to begin this spring and be completed by the end of the summer. The design is being done by Ken J. Savoie Architecture of Ipswich, with assistance from Chicago-based American Hydrotech. The U.S. Geological Survey, DCR’s scientific partner in the project, will monitor runoff volume and pollutant levels from the green roof for three years.

Though it is the first green roof in Ipswich, the Whipple green roof will not be the first in Massachusetts. Green roofs are already in place at Boston City Hall, the World Trade Center in South Boston, the new IKEA store in Stoughton, and Manulife Financial's new building in the Boston’s Seaport District.

Progress reports on the green roof and the other Ipswich River demonstration projects will be posted on the DCR web site, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/ipswichRiver/index.htm>.

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Attached photos (Please credit photos, if used):

Green roof on the podium level of the World Trade Center, South Boston. © 2005,

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Diagram of a Green Roof. Portland, Oregon, Environmental Services.

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